

Message Text

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13

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-07 NSC-10 SPC-03 SS-20 RSC-01

CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 PRS-01 L-03 DRC-01 SSO-00

NSCE-00 INRE-00 AF-10 NEA-10 /091 W

----- 063095

O R 230836Z NOV 73

FM AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2050

INFO COMNAVTELCOM WASHDC

CNO WASHDC

CINCPAC HONOLULU

CINCPACREP AUSTRALIA

COMNAVSTA HAROLD E HOLT

C O N F I D E N T I A L CANBERRA 6372

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MIL, AS, US

SUBJ: DISMANTLING AND REMOVAL FROM AUSTRALIA OF SATELLITE

TERMINAL AT NAVCOMSTA HAROLD E HOLT (NORTHWEST CAPE)

REF: CANBERRA 6371

1. EMBASSY INFORMED MORNING NOVEMBER 23 BY CAPTAIN CUNNINGHAM, US COMMANDER OF NAVCOMSTA HAROLD E HOLT, THAT HE HAD RECEIVED ORDERS TO DISMANTLE AND PREPARE FOR SHIPMENT OUT OF AUSTRALIA WITHIN ONE WEEK SATELLITE TERMINAL AT HIS STATION. WE UNDERSTAND THIS INVOLVES REMOVAL OF DOME AND BUILDING ASSOCIATED WITH DOME WHICH ARE BOTH VISIBLE ELEMENTS OF PRESENT STATION. DISMANTLING OF THESE STRUCTURES BEGAN AFTERNOON NOVEMBER 22 AND HAS ALREADY CAUSED SOME LOCAL SPECULATION.

2. UPON RECEIPT OF INFORMATION FROM CAPTAIN CUNNINGHAM, EMBOFFS MADE FORMAL CALL UPON SENIOR OFFICERS IN ADOD AND DFA TO INFORM THEM THAT DOME AND BUILDING WERE BEING REMOVED TO NEW LOCATION
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(FOR GOA'S INFORMATION ONLY WE STATED OUR UNDERSTANDING THAT

MOVEMENT WAS TO DIEGO GARCIA). WE NOTED THAT MOVEMENT IS NOT RELATED TO NEGOTIATIONS OVER NORTHWEST CAPE STATION OR TO RECENT PARLIAMENTARY DEBATE OVER US LACK OF CONSULTATION AT TIME MIDDLE EAST ALERT WAS CALLED OCTOBER 25.

3. GOA ASSURED US THAT INFORMATION WOULD BE GIVEN TO AUSTRALIAN MINISTERS FOR THEIR USE IN RESPONDING TO POSSIBLE PRESS OR PARLIAMENTARY QUESTIONS. GOA REPS AGREED WITH EMBASSY LINE GIVEN PARA 2 ABOVE AND FORMULATED FOLLOWING PROPOSED RESPONSES FOR USE ON AN IF-ASKED BASIS ONLY: THEY WOULD EMPHASIZE TECHNICAL NATURE OF MOVE AND MOBILE-TRANSPORTABLE NATURE OF SATELLITE TERMINAL EQUIPMENT. THEY WOULD STATE MOVE HAD NO RELATION TO FUTURE OF NORTHWEST CAPE STATION OR TO NEGOTIATIONS ON NORTHWEST CAPE STATION AGREEMENT WHICH DEFMIN BARNARD HOPED TO CONCLUDE DURING FORTHCOMING VISIT TO WASHINGTON. THEY WOULD LIKE TO SAY IF PRESSED THAT GOA IS INFORMED OF NEW LOCATION FOR EQUIPMENT BUT WOULD NOT DIVULGE WHERE THAT IS. IF ASKED, GOA MINISTERS WOULD DENY ANY CONNECTION BETWEEN MOVE AND RECENT DEBATE IN PARLIAMENT OVER LACK OF CONSULTATIONS ON MIDDLE EAST BETWEEN USG AND GOA.

4. EMBASSY BELIEVES FOREGOING RESPONSE WILL BE ACCEPTABLE AS FIRST-CUT AND OVER WEEKEND WHEN MINISTERS AND GOA OFFICIALS ARE NOTORIOUSLY UNAVAILABLE. SINCE THIS RESPONSE HAS AS YET NOT RECEIVED MINISTERIAL APPROVAL IT IS POSSIBLE THAT SOME CHANGES WILL BE MADE. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES RECONVENES 1400 HOURS MONDAY, NOVEMBER 26, AND ANY FURTHER PUBLIC INFORMATION WHICH WOULD BE USEFUL FOR PRIME MINISTER TO HAVE AT THAT TIME WOULD BE MOST WELCOME. WOULD ALSO APPRECIATE ANY ADDITIONAL CLASSIFIED INFORMATION WE COULD PASS GOA IN CONFIDENCE.

5. WHILE CURRENT ATTITUDE OF DFA AND ADOD REPS IS HELPFUL AND CONSTRUCTIVE, WE MUST WORK HARD TO AVOID ANY DETERIORATION OF OUR PRESENT DELICATE POSITION ON NORTHWEST CAPE (REFTEL). ANY ACTION RELATING TO NORTHWEST CAPE IS POLITICALLY SENSITIVE MATTER IN AUSTRALIAN DOMESTIC CONTEXT AND SHOULD BE WELL PREPARED IN ADVANCE. EMBASSY EMPHASIZES NEED TO BE AS FORTHCOMING AS POSSIBLE ON SATELLITE TERMINAL MOVE NOW IN ATTEMPT TO AVOID UNRESTRAINED SPECULATION IN AUSTRALIAN PRESS AS TO MOTIVES FOR MOVE. REQUEST EMBASSY BE INFORMED WITHOUT FAIL AND IN ADVANCE OF ANY FUTURE SUCH ACTIONS AT NORTHWEST CAPE TO PERMIT TIMELY CONFIDENTIAL

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CONSULTATION WITH GOA, OR AT LEAST ADVANCE NOTICE.
GREEN

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
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Draft Date: 23 NOV 1973
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